

## HOW CAN WE APPROACH GOD?

### First There Has To Be A Need

First of all there has to be a need, a desire to approach God. There are many of us who have such a need and, indeed, who attend various groups or gatherings to fulfil that need; but, truly speaking, have we received that fulfilment? If we had then we would not be here. The fact is that in spite of all the comfort we derive from material sources like food, shelter and clothing; the support we enjoy from relatives (parents, husbands, wives, children) and friends; and in spite of the respect accruing to us from prestige of name and fame, we still lack true happiness or inner contentment.

Many people do not see the need to contact God at all. They reason that, whether we think of Him or not, He maintains us, gives us food and other necessities of life in the world He has created. He is looking after us anyway, so why worry about looking for Him?

### We Need To Seek Him Now

Others reason that they need not worry or think about searching for God now, in this lifetime, they will leave that problem to their next lifetime. But is this wise?

For example, if you went to your Bank Manager and said to him "Mr Manager, in my previous life I was a multi-billionaire and I now need a loan of one or two million. I will repay the loan with interest in my next lifetime, so please help me." Do you think you will get the loan? Certainly not! In fact he may even get you committed to a mental asylum.

Yet others say, "Well, when we die we become angels and fairies. So we return to God anyway after death." But, if you really think about it my friends, you will realise that if we have not already become fairies or angels before we sleep, we will not be angels or fairies when we wake up.

In the same way too we will not become anything significant after the sleep of death, unless we have earned or accumulated it **now** -here, in this lifetime. We have to look for it this minute, today not tomorrow.

### You Have To Know The Method & Make The Effort

Even those who feel the need to contact God now, in this life, often get discouraged because they do not understand how to proceed in their efforts to contact this Power we call God, Allah, Parameswara or Creator. Some of these people think "I have prayed but am not sure if He is listening because I did not get what I asked for", and they give up.

But, just as material success requires systematic application, so too do spiritual matters.

Our educational institutions prepare for us lessons in so many different subjects of our choice and, also, not of our choice. There is Kindergarten followed by Primary and then the higher grades of schooling and, finally, the University; all so that we can pursue our own avenues of interest according to our tastes and likings and the needs of earning our livelihood. These institutions provide us with the method of making a living but we have to make the effort to learn and, later, to earn the living.

Some of us get to the top in our careers and some of us don't. Some of us experience glimpses of success and happiness and others don't. Some of us join this Prayer Group and some of us join a different one. Some of us join one religion and some choose another. Some prefer one method of worship while others prefer another way. There are so many choices and differences of opinion. How then can we know how to approach our Creator when there are so many religions, each one claiming that it will lead us to Heaven?

### **Experience Is The Proof**

So many of you have tried one or many paths; but do you feel that you are any closer to the Truth? Surely, your own **Self-realisation** of Truth, not blind dogma or blind faith, must be the only binding force in your spiritual life. It is in our own interests, therefore, that we open ourselves to the Inner Power, the Sixth Sense, and follow the Truth that comes from within. We must not be bound by false beliefs, blind faith, or to customs and traditions which we are required to perform mechanically, like robots.

The Power I am talking about is a power that cannot be deceived by the false habits of mankind. It is all-knowing. It is all-powerful. It is ever-present and everywhere, whether you are aware of it or not, whether you acknowledge it or not. You have to ask IT in a simple yet sincere way to guide you; and you can prove through your own experience the truth of what I am telling you.

### **The Silver Lining**

It is terrible how we human beings hurt ourselves in so many ways; and yet we, the human race, are supposed to be the Jewel of Creation.

What is it that makes us the Jewel of Creation? It is that our Creator has given us the power to control our own thinking. We can use that power in a positive way. Each and every individual can become Self-realised through the use of that power.

Although we don't always have reason to be proud of ourselves as human beings because of our mistakes, we should not become discouraged. There is a silver lining in every experience. We can learn from our mistakes and turn to That Power no matter what happens.

## The Path

Tell me please, as far as you are aware has anyone ever received something significant without that person first having to put effort into it? No, definitely not! You see there is an eternal Law which states that there is no such thing as getting something for nothing. You cannot take something out of nothing, no matter what it may be. First, you have to know for certain what you require. Then you have to know the method of acquiring it. Next you have to make the effort.

It is the same process with this God-given power lying within us. We have to have a desire for Him and then know the method by which to find our Creator, the method by which we can approach and please God. There are several methods of getting closer to God. For instance, we can pray, affirm, serve, contemplate, concentrate and meditate; but, actually, the best way to **obtain** God is to follow a path that includes all of these.

For example, if a group of engineers got together but only prayed for new inventions to appear and did nothing else, would they get them? Certainly not! What then will they have to do? They have to apply certain Laws, namely God's Laws.

So, in the same way, how can a Mandir or a Church bring you That Power just by blind prayer or ceremony? We should go to the Mandir or Church, not for the social activity or because of the beautiful bhajans and music, but to **contact** That Power. We should go for the spiritual development which will give us the required consciousness.

I am not trying to change anybody's religion, nor am I criticising anyone's belief. What I am talking about is above and beyond such considerations. I am talking about a Power, an Energy, which will enable you to find the Truth through your own Self-realisation, **once you know how to contact or communicate with It faithfully.**

It is a Power that you will come to love, as Lord Christ put it "...with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind." (Mark, 12:30). In other words, you reach a state of prayer-without-ceasing.

Lord Buddha's teaching was similar "Meditate on your True Nature"; and so was Lord Krishna's "He attains the supreme light of the Creator whose mind is stabilised by yoga (union or joining), who is immovably fixed on the thought of That Power or God" (Gita viii:8). **All Prophets and Masters of Truth have given the same teachings.**

## Prayer With The Correct Motive

All the Great Ones, the Masters, the Prophets, have proclaimed the existence of this Power, realised through their own experience. Our history books and Scriptures bear testimony to this Truth. We read about It. We sing about It. And we even talk about It. But, actually, that experience cannot be had by looking in books because it is an experience **WITHIN** us.

I am sure that many of us have sat quietly and prayed without anything happening. We have not been able to contact That Power we call God. The reason is that blind prayer or prayer with the wrong motive will not work. You can pray eight hours a day from now onwards to become say a Rockefeller or a Michael Jackson, but that prayer will not be granted. But if you pray sincerely to God "I am your child made in your experience (image). Make me One with your experience". That prayer will be completed for you.

Thus, for prayer to succeed, we have to make an effort with the correct attitude and motive. We have to re-establish our lost relationship with That Power, then we can have everything. You have to experience in truth from within that you are One with that Power, with your Creator.

### **Oneness**

I am reminded here of an incident from the Ramayana. During a particular ceremony, Lord Rama was looking at his most loving devotee, Hanuman, with great attention and admiration. Lord Rama's consort, Sita, noticed this and tried so many times to draw Lord Rama's attention to herself but without success. The Lord ignored her and she felt very disappointed that her Lord should pay so much attention to Hanuman. After a while, Lord Rama called Hanuman to him and pulled out a hair from his (Hanuman's) body. Sita, who was sitting near to her Lord, asked why he had done that. When Lord Rama put the hair close to Sita's ear, she at once realised how much Hanuman meant to Lord Rama: even that single hair was repeating the Lord's Name.

We cannot even imagine the love Hanuman had for the Lord. He was a part of Him. Hanuman had realised That Truth (Oneness) from his own experience, through his own efforts. And so we also have to make an effort with the correct motive.

### **Freedom Of Choice**

Many people say that they have prayed hard, over long periods, for their wishes to be fulfilled, but without success. They begin to believe therefore that God is punishing them by withholding what they desire. But the truth is that God does not punish us for our wrongs. In fact, we punish ourselves by reaping what we have sown. Our Creator has given each and everyone of us the freedom, the choice, the privilege to sow whatever we want, whenever we want; but in the clear understanding that we must also reap what we have sown. It is an Eternal Law, unchangeable, revocable only by His Grace.

### **The Power Within**

His Power is overwhelming with love and kindness and yet we cannot see it; but those that live in Him and with Him will also experience His Qualities and His Power. One such Master who expressed those godlike qualities was Lord Christ. He could have destroyed those who sought to crucify him. Instead what did he do? He said "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do". He represented God by his humility and by his refusal to use his tremendous power to punish his tormentors.

I am aware of one thing for certain: that God or that Power is able to help you. But it is His desire to express His qualities of good in and through you and me. This explains the long list of Masters, Prophets, Saints and Messengers who have walked the Earth at different times, in different ages, spreading the Truth. They have come to spread the Truth that this Universal Power is available to the rich and the poor, the sick and the healthy, the educated and the illiterate, the young and the old, in fact to all human beings regardless of their positions in life, irrespective of cast, colour and creed, providing only that they have a childlike faith, a faith without any doubts whatsoever: an **INNER FAITH**.